

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the pending Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-8, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Fukui '985; and rejected claims 9 and 10, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Fukui '985 in view of Vona '067.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant submits that entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments ***merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution*** and recite ***similar subject matter that was contained within the now-cancelled dependent claims***; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended for form and clarity and claims 3, 4, and 10 have been cancelled. Moreover, the Specification and Abstract have been amended for clarity. No new matter has been added. Therefore, claims 1 and 6-9 are currently presented for examination, of which claim 1 is the sole independent claim. Support for the instant amendments is provided throughout the Specification.

Applicants traverse the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections for the following reasons:

I. REJECTIONS UNDER §102(b) and §103(a).

As noted above, independent claim 1 positively recites, *inter alia*, the baffle assembly includes an ***auxiliary baffle*** which is provided on an inner surface of the inner peripheral wall of the rotating tub so as to extend in an axial direction of the rotating tub and is located so as

to be close to the front end plate of the rotating tub and *spaced away from the rear end plate* and the *auxiliary baffle has an inclined portion which descends from the front end plate side toward the rear end plate side thereby to be inclined* relative to a horizontal plane in order that laundry located near the front end plate may be moved toward the rear end plate and a triangular inclined surface downwardly inclined from the inclined portion toward the inner peripheral wall of the rotating tub.

The claim features noted above are amply supported by the embodiments disclosed throughout the written description. (See, e.g., Specification: page 19, line 24 – page 21, line 5). By way of review, when the rotating tub is cantilever-supported on the rotating shaft only at the axial rear end thereof, the weight at the front end plate side brings about moment rotating the front end plate side of the rotating tub downward with the rear end plate side near the rotating shaft serving as a fulcrum. However, the rotating tub can easily to cause oscillation. To minimize this problem, the drum washing machine is designed so that the gravity center of oscillating system comes close to the rear end plate side, that is, the cantilever-supported rotating shaft side.

Moreover, when the rotating tub is inclined, laundry in the rotating tub tends to gather in the direction of the rear end plate. Accordingly, since the gravity center is displaced to the cantilever-supported rotating shaft (the rear end plate) side, this generally is effective in reducing the rotating tub oscillation. However, Applicants have noticed that when the amount of laundry is large, laundry located at the front end side is blocked by the laundry remaining at the rear end side, thereby being insufficiently displaced to the rear end side. This causes the axial gravity center of the rotating tub to displace to the front end plate side which is spaced away from the cantilever-supported rotating shaft. As a result, the oscillation of the rotating tub is increased.

With this said, the embodiments disclosed in the present written description provide a configuration in which the auxiliary baffle has an inclined portion (23a) which descends from

the front end plate side toward the rear end plate side and is inclined relative to a horizontal plane in order that laundry located near the front end plate may be moved toward the rear end plate and a triangular inclined surface (23b) downwardly inclined from the inclined portion (23a) toward the inner peripheral wall of the rotating tub. Thus, even in the case where a part of laundry is located at the front end side and another part of the laundry is located at the rear end plate side when the laundry amount is large, the laundry located at the front end plate side is pushed toward the rear end plate while the laundry located at the rear end plate side is compressed. With this configuration, the gravity center of the rotating tub is displaced to the cantilever-supported rotating shaft side, in which the oscillation of the rotating shaft is effectively reduced.

Applicant submits that none of the asserted references, whether taken alone or in combination, suggest each and every element of claim 1 including, for example, the features noted above. In particular, the primary reference, Fukui '985, discloses a rotating tub that is cantilever-supported on the rotating shaft only. Fukui '985 further discloses that baffle 20 *descends from a rear end plate toward a front end plate to a peripheral wall side*. The baffle 20 also contains *an end surface* which protrudes from a drum body 6a and *is parallel to a horizontal plane*.

In so doing, there is nothing in Fukui '985 that remotely suggests that the auxiliary baffle descends from the front end plate side toward the rear end plate side to the peripheral wall side in order that laundry located near the front end plate may be moved toward the rear end plate. To the contrary, Fukui '985 specifically discloses that the baffle *descends from a rear end plate toward a front end plate to a peripheral wall side*.

Nor is there anything in Fukui '985 that contemplates or describes that the inclined portion is inclined relative to a horizontal plane. Rather, Fukui '985 specifically teaches that the end surface of the baffle *is parallel to a horizontal plane*.

As such, Fukui '985 fails to suggest, in any way, that the baffle assembly includes an *auxiliary baffle* which is provided on an inner surface of the inner peripheral wall of the rotating tub so as to extend in an axial direction of the rotating tub and is located so as *to be close to the front end plate* of the rotating tub and *spaced away from the rear end plate* and the *auxiliary baffle has an inclined portion which descends from the front end plate side toward the rear end plate side thereby to be inclined* relative to a horizontal plane in order that laundry located near the front end plate may be moved toward the rear end plate and a triangular inclined surface downwardly inclined from the inclined portion toward the inner peripheral wall of the rotating tub, as required by claim 1.

Applicant further submits that the remaining reference, Vona '067, is incapable of curing the deficiencies of Fukui '985 noted above. Thus, for at least these reasons, Applicant submits that independent claim 1 is not rendered obvious by asserted references. As such, claim 1 is clearly patentable and, because claims 6-9 depend from claim 1, claims 6-9 are patentable at least by virtue of dependency as well as for their additional recitations.

Accordingly, the immediate withdrawal of the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Having addressed each of the foregoing rejections, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

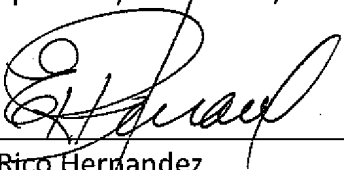
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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